

# **FGDC Summary of the Covered Agency and Lead Covered Agency Annual Reports for FY 2020—Fulfilling Requirements of the Geospatial Data Act of 2018**

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## Federal Geographic Data Committee, Reston, Virginia: 2021

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## Abbreviations

<b>FGDC</b>	Federal Geographic Data Committee
<b>GDA</b>	Geospatial Data Act of 2018
<b>NGAC</b>	National Geospatial Advisory Committee
<b>NGDA</b>	National Geospatial Data Asset
<b>NSDI</b>	National Spatial Data Infrastructure
<b>OMB</b>	Office of Management and Budget
<b>U.S.C.</b>	United States Code

# FGDC Summary of the Covered Agency and Lead Covered Agency Annual Reports for FY 2020—Fulfilling Requirements of the Geospatial Data Act of 2018

By the Federal Geographic Data Committee

## 1. Introduction

The Geospatial Data Act of 2018 (GDA) (43 U.S.C. 46) codifies responsibilities for the management of geospatial data and resources by Federal agencies in coordination with partners and stakeholders in other sectors. The GDA establishes the Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) as “the lead entity in the executive branch for the development, implementation, and review of policies, practices, and standards relating to geospatial data” (Section 2802(a)). The GDA also supports the coordinated implementation of the National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI) and the development and management of National Geospatial Data Assets (NGDAs). The NGDA portfolio currently includes 169 approved NGDA datasets organized under 18 data themes.

### 1.1. Geospatial Data Act Reporting Requirements

The GDA includes management and reporting responsibilities for “covered agencies” (agencies identified in the GDA as having specific geospatial management responsibilities), and “lead covered agencies” (covered agencies that also have the lead responsibility for coordination and management of NGDA data themes). These agencies are responsible for submitting annual reports on their performance in meeting the requirements of the GDA. The covered agency and lead covered agency reporting responsibilities are described in greater detail below.

### 1.2. FGDC Reporting Approach

The FGDC agencies have collaborated to develop an enterprise approach for tracking and reporting progress on GDA requirements. Agencies have developed a set of online tools, using standardized criteria, to develop consistent reports in a coordinated, efficient manner. Agencies conducted self-assessments of their performance using these standardized tools. Extensive coordination among the agencies and the FGDC Office of the Secretariat has been done to develop this reporting approach and to ensure consistency across the reports. The reports include the mandated rating of “meets expectations,” “made progress toward expectations,” or “fails to meet expectations” for each of the requirements identified in the GDA. This initial set of reports will provide a baseline for future reports, and the FGDC will refine the metrics and reporting processes based on the results of this initial reporting period.

### 1.3. Content of This Summary Report

As required under Sections 2802(c)(10)(A) and (B) of the GDA, this report provides a summary of the performance status of each covered agency and for each NGDA data theme. The report covers the period from October 5, 2018 (when the GDA was enacted) through September 30, 2020 (the end of fiscal year 2020). Subsequent reports will each cover one fiscal year.

This report also includes links to the more detailed underlying reports that were developed by each covered agency and lead covered agency. This summary report, along with comments from the National Geospatial Advisory Committee (NGAC) and the FGDC member agencies, will be included as an appendix to the biennial FGDC GDA report to Congress and will also be published separately online. The FGDC provided [phase 1 of the 2020 GDA report to Congress](#) (Federal Geographic Data Committee, 2020) in January 2021. Phase 2 of the 2020 GDA report to Congress, which will contain this summary report, will be provided to Congress in June 2021. The FGDC maintains a web page that includes all GDA-required reports. The FGDC has also developed online dashboards that provide access to the information included in the reports. All materials are available at <https://www.fgdc.gov/gda/gda-reports/>. Table 1 provides additional detail about the roles and responsibilities of the FGDC member agencies in implementing the GDA.

**Table 1.** Roles and responsibilities of the FGDC member agencies under the Geospatial Data Act of 2018.

[CA, covered agency; LCA, lead covered agency; FGDC, Federal Geographic Data Committee; NGDA, National Geospatial Data Asset; GDA, Geospatial Data Act of 2018; –, none]

CA	LCA	FGDC member agency	NGDA theme lead <sup>1</sup>	NGDA dataset manager <sup>2</sup>
X	X	Department of Agriculture	3	15
X	X	Department of Commerce	6	59
X	–	Department of Education	–	–
X	–	Department of Energy	–	–
X	–	Department of Health and Human Services	–	–
X	–	Department of Homeland Security	–	1
X	–	Department of Housing and Urban Development	–	12
X	X	Department of the Interior	9	56
X	–	Department of Justice	–	–
X	–	Department of Labor	–	–
X	X	Department of State	1	1
X	X	Department of Transportation	2	8
X	–	Department of Treasury	–	–
X	–	Department of Veterans Affairs	–	–
X	X	General Services Administration	1	1
X	–	National Aeronautics and Space Administration	–	3
–	–	National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency/Department of Defense <sup>3</sup>	–	10
–	–	Office of Management and Budget <sup>3</sup>	–	–
Nonmember agencies/organizations that manage NGDAs				
–	–	Environmental Protection Agency	–	1
–	–	International Boundary Commission	–	1
–	–	International Boundary Water Commission	–	1
Totals			22	169

<sup>1</sup>The total represents the 22 theme leads and co-leads across the 18 NGDA themes. The total number of leads is greater than the total number of themes because some of the NGDA themes are co-led across agencies. A list of the NGDA themes and agency leads is available at <https://communities.geoplatform.gov/ngda-portfolio/ngda-theme-leads/>.

<sup>2</sup>Number of NGDAs managed by agency/organization. The NGDA portfolio datasets are available at <https://communities.geoplatform.gov/ngda-portfolio/ngda-portfolio/>.

<sup>3</sup>Organization is not a covered agency but has specific NGDA management responsibilities.

## 2. Covered Agency Annual Reports

### 2.1. Overview

Section 2808(b) of the GDA requires each covered agency to submit to the FGDC “an annual report regarding the achievements of the covered agency in preparing and implementing the strategy described in subsection (a)(1) and complying with the other requirements under subsection (a).” The reporting process and information on how to access the results are described below.

#### Common Reporting Process

The FGDC covered agencies developed a common reporting process, based on a standardized online questionnaire, to facilitate consistent reporting on covered agency GDA responsibilities. Using a common template and criteria, the agencies conducted self-assessments of their performance in addressing the following covered agency GDA responsibilities:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Covered agency geospatial strategies                               | 8. Promote application of geospatial data assets |
| 2. Support data sharing   | 9. Protection of privacy and confidentiality     |
| 3. Promote data integration   | 10. Declassified data                            |
| 4. Ensure records retention schedule for geospatial data              | 11. Non-duplication of data                      |
| 5. Allocate resources for geospatial data management responsibilities | 12. Ensuring high-quality data                   |
| 6. Use data standards   | 13. Point of contact                             |
| 7. Support coordination and partnerships                              |  |

The fiscal year 2020 covered agency annual reports will provide a baseline for future reports and assessments of performance.

Agencies are responsible for maintaining documentation to support the responses provided for their self-assessments. Each agency’s annual report includes additional details about the agency’s performance and achievements. In addition, to support a more comprehensive picture of agency progress and related activities, agencies had the option to submit a two-page overview document as part of their submissions.

#### Access to Summary Reports

The results of the self-assessments of the covered agencies’ progress in meeting GDA requirements are summarized in table 2. Links to a dashboard that provides online access to covered agency report information and to the pdf versions of the final annual reports for each GDA covered agency are listed after table 2.

## 2.2. Summary of Results—Covered Agency Annual Reports

**Table 2.** Summary of covered agency evaluations.

[Evaluation results: M, meets expectations, P, made progress towards expectations; F, fails to meet expectations. Other abbreviations used: GDA, Geospatial Data Act of 2018; U.S.C., United States Code; USDA, Department of Agriculture; DOC, Department of Commerce; ED, Department of Education; DOE, Department of Energy; HHS, Department of Health and Human Services; DHS, Department of Homeland Security; HUD, Department of Housing and Urban Development; DOI, Department of the Interior; DOJ, Department of Justice; DOL, Department of Labor; DOS, Department of State; DOT, Department of Transportation; TREAS, Department of the Treasury; VA, Department of Veterans Affairs GSA, General Services Administration; NASA, National Aeronautics and Space Administration]

Requirement	GDA 43 U.S.C. 2808 (a)(1)–(13) Covered agency															
	USDA	DOC	ED	DOE	HHS	DHS	HUD	DOI	DOJ	DOL	DOS	DOT	TREAS	VA	GSA	NASA
(1) Covered agency geospatial strategies	M	P	M	M	P	P	P	M	M	P	P	P	P	M	P	P
(2) Support data sharing	P	M	M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	P	P	M	M	M	P
(3) Promote data integration	P	M	M	P	M	P	M	M	M	P	M	M	M	P	M	M
(4) Ensure records retention schedule for geospatial data	P	M	P	P	M	P	F	P	M	M	M	P	M	P	M	P
(5) Allocate resources for geospatial data management responsibilities	P	M	P	P	P	P	P	P	M	P	P	M	M	M	P	M
(6) Use data standards	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	M
(7) Support coordination and partnerships	P	M	M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	P	M	M	M	P	P
(8) Promote application of geospatial data assets	P	M	M	P	P	P	M	P	M	P	P	P	P	M	M	P
(9) Protection of privacy and confidentiality	P	M	M	M	M	P	M	P	M	M	P	P	M	M	M	M
(10) Declassified data	M	M	M	F	M	F	M	M	F	M	F	M	M	M	M	M
(11) Non-duplication of data	P	M	M	P	M	P	M	P	P	M	P	P	M	M	M	M
(12) Ensuring high-quality data	P	M	M	M	M	P	M	M	M	M	P	M	M	P	M	M
(13) Point of contact	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M

The FGDC maintains a dashboard for the covered agency annual reports at <https://www.fgdc.gov/gda/gda-ca-reports/dashboard>. The covered agency annual reports in pdf format are available at <https://www.fgdc.gov/gda/gda-ca-reports> and through the following links:

[Department of Agriculture](#)  
[Department of Commerce](#)  
[Department of Education](#)  
[Department of Energy](#)  
[Department of Health and Human Services](#)  
[Department of Homeland Security](#)  
[Department of Housing and Urban Development](#)  
[Department of the Interior](#)

[Department of Justice](#)  
[Department of Labor](#)  
[Department of State](#)  
[Department of Transportation](#)  
[Department of Treasury](#)  
[Department of Veterans Affairs](#)  
[General Services Administration](#)  
[National Aeronautics and Space Administration](#)

## 3. Lead Covered Agency Annual NGDA Data Theme Reports

### 3.1. Overview

Section 2805(b)(3)(E) of the GDA requires lead covered agencies responsible for NGDA data themes to submit annual performance reports to the FGDC. These reports document “the activities relating to and implementation of the National Geospatial Data Asset data theme, including progress in achieving the requirements under subparagraphs (A), (B), (C), and (D)” of Section 2805(b)(3). The reporting process used and information on how to access the results are described below.

#### Common Reporting Process

The FGDC lead covered agencies developed a common reporting process to facilitate consistent and efficient reporting on NGDA data theme responsibilities. The lead covered agencies conducted self-assessments of their performance using a report template developed to produce consistent reports across agencies. The agencies reported their performance in addressing the following key NGDA data theme responsibilities as required by the GDA:

- A. Geospatial data standards;
- B. Nationwide population of the data theme;
- C. Establish actions that support the goals and objectives in the NSDI strategic plan; and
- D. Addressing user needs.

Prior to the enactment of the GDA, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) “Circular A–16 Supplemental Guidance” directed the FGDC to establish management practices for the NGDA portfolio and to adopt and implement coordinated Federal geospatial asset management capabilities (Office of Management and Budget, 2010). In recent years, the FGDC member agencies implemented portfolio management processes that included development of data theme strategic plans, implementation plans, and documentation of other efforts, such as lifecycle maturity assessments conducted on all NGDA datasets. The 2020 lead covered agency annual reports build on these efforts and provide a baseline for the future development of GDA-required plans for nationwide population of the NGDA data themes.

The lead covered agency reports highlight ongoing strategic activities related to the data themes and the FGDC portfolio management activities that align with the requirements of the GDA.

#### Summary Report

The FGDC member agencies agreed to use a common template to enable consistent reporting across all NGDA data themes. The agency evaluations of their performance in meeting GDA requirements for the NGDA data themes are summarized in table 3. Links to a dashboard providing online access to NGDA theme report information and to the pdf versions of the final annual reports for each NGDA data theme are listed after table 3.

## 3.2. Summary of Results—Lead Covered Agency Annual NGDA Data Theme Reports

**Table 3.** FGDC summary of lead covered agency National Geospatial Data Asset data theme evaluations.

[Evaluation results: M, meets expectations, P, made progress towards expectations; F, fails to meet expectations. Other abbreviations used: GDA, Geospatial Data Act of 2018; U.S.C., United States Code; NGDA, National Geospatial Data Asset; NSDI, National Spatial Data Infrastructure]

Theme and number of NGDAs (169)	GDA 43 U.S.C. 2805 (b)(3) (A)–(D) requirements			
	(A) Geospatial data standards	(B) Nationwide population of the data theme	(C) Establish actions that support the goals and objectives in the NSDI strategic plan	(D) Addressing user needs
Address (0)	P	P	P	P
Biodiversity and ecosystems (7)	P	P	P	P
Cadastral (18)	P	P	P	P
Climate and weather (4)	P	P	P	P
Cultural resources (2)	P	P	P	F
Elevation (12)	P	P	P	P
Geodetic control (4)	P	P	P	P
Geology (6)	P	P	P	P
Governmental units, and administrative and statistical boundaries (37)	P	P	P	P
Imagery (8)	P	P	P	P
International boundaries (1)	M	P	M	P
Land use—Land cover (13)	M	M	P	P
Real property (14)	P	P	P	P
Soils (5)	P	P	P	P
Transportation (15)	P	P	M	M
Utilities (2)	P	P	P	P
Water—Inland (5)	P	P	P	P
Water—Oceans and coasts (16)	P	P	P	P

The FGDC maintains a dashboard for the lead covered agency NGDA data themes at <https://www.fgdc.gov/gda/gda-lca-theme-reports/dashboard>. The lead covered agency NGDA data theme annual reports in pdf format are available at <https://www.fgdc.gov/gda/gda-lca-theme-reports> and through the following links:

<a href="#">Address</a>	<a href="#">Geodetic control</a>	<a href="#">Real property</a>
<a href="#">Biodiversity and ecosystems</a>	<a href="#">Geology</a>	<a href="#">Soils</a>
<a href="#">Cadastral</a>	<a href="#">Governmental units</a>	<a href="#">Transportation</a>
<a href="#">Climate and weather</a>	<a href="#">Imagery</a>	<a href="#">Utilities</a>
<a href="#">Cultural resources</a>	<a href="#">International boundaries</a>	<a href="#">Water—Inland</a>
<a href="#">Elevation</a>	<a href="#">Land use—Land cover</a>	<a href="#">Water—Oceans and coasts</a>

## 4. Conclusion

### 4.1. Key Observations

- Since the enactment of the GDA, the FGDC agencies have focused on establishing a common understanding of the requirements and developing strategies that support reporting. Significant effort went into developing streamlined and consistent reporting processes to enable comparative results. The common reporting approach and self-assessment metrics have provided useful baseline information that will serve as a foundation for future reporting.
- The development of a streamlined approach to establishing consistent baseline reports and processes required significant FGDC Office of the Secretariat staff resources and contract support.
- Results from the covered agency and lead covered agency reports show that agencies are making progress in addressing the requirements of the GDA. However, agencies will have challenges in fully meeting the requirements of the act, and significant work remains to fully meet the vision of the GDA.
- All covered agencies identified in the GDA provided reporting information that is included in this report.
- The FGDC will refine the GDA metrics and reporting approach based on lessons learned from this initial round of reporting and feedback from users and stakeholders. The reporting approach may also be affected by instructions included in the revised version of OMB Circular A-16 (“Coordination of Geospatial Information and Related Spatial Data Activities”), which is under development.
- The GDA includes significant and complex reporting requirements. A [National Geospatial Advisory Committee Resolution](#), approved in June 2020, included the following recommendation: “Given that the GDA planning and reporting requirements are considerable and highly complex, **the NGAC recommends streamlining of the reporting processes to ensure focused, efficient, and consistent reporting across government**” (National Geospatial Advisory Committee, 2020). Based on the experience of this first round of reporting, the FGDC agencies believe the reporting process could be simplified and streamlined while still ensuring transparency and accountability for results.

### 4.2. Challenges and Recommendations

The GDA provides a constructive framework for development of national geospatial data assets and processes to ensure accountability and transparency in geospatial investments. However, agencies face a number of challenges for the successful implementation of the statute. These include addressing the significant reporting and audit responsibilities included in the GDA; significant new workloads for agencies and programs using existing agency resources to address the requirements of the statute, and the ability to continually provide high-quality geospatial information and services for the benefit of the public.

#### Recommendations

To address these challenges, the FGDC member agencies present the following recommendations:

- Streamline and simplify the reporting and audit requirements in the GDA while continuing to ensure accountability, transparency, and efficiency.
- Align the planning, reporting, and audit requirements in the GDA with other data-related statutes, including the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018 (“Evidence Act”), which includes the OPEN Government Data Act.

If supported by Congress, these recommendations would reduce administrative impacts on agency operations, improve agency mission execution, and promote value-added service delivery to other agencies, partners, and the public.

The FGDC member agencies look forward to continuing to work with Congress to meet the intent of the GDA to provide an integrated, sustainable, and world leading NSDI while ensuring efficiency and transparency.

## 5. Selected References

Federal Geographic Data Committee, 2020, Geospatial Data Act report to Congress—Phase 1 report: Reston, Va., Federal Geographic Data Committee, December, 20 p., <https://www.fgdc.gov/gda/gda-reports/gda-report-to-congress-phase-1.pdf>.

National Geospatial Advisory Committee, 2020, Resolution adopted by the NGAC on June 10, 2020: National Geospatial Advisory Committee, 1 p., <https://www.fgdc.gov/ngac/meetings/june-2020/ngac-resolution-on-the-geospatial-data-act-june.pdf>.

Office of Management and Budget, 2010, Circular A–16 Supplemental Guidance: Office of Management and Budget, November 10, 33 p., <https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/whitehouse.gov/files/omb/memoranda/2011/m11-03.pdf>.

